

MEETING SUMMARY

Focus Macomb Transportation Committee

**Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick -- Conference Room
24668 Hall Road
Clinton Township, Michigan**

June 6, 2006

Members Present:

Anthony Lombardo, President, Lombardo Companies
Anthony Viviano, President, Sterling Heights Dodge
Lillian Adams, Executive Director, Sterling/Utica/Shelby Twp. Chamber
Benjamin Aloia, President, Aloia & Associates
Fran Gillet, Commissioner, Macomb County Road Commission
Richard Ives, Vice-President, John Carlo, Inc.
David Lakin, Vice-President, Spalding DeDecker Associates
Ralph Maccarone, Supervisor, Shelby Township
Vic Martin, President, Best Western Sterling Inn
Roy Rose, President, Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick ~ Focus Macomb Co-Chair
Gregory L. Windingland, Development Coordinator, Lombardo Companies
Bill Westrick, Principal Engineer, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick

Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Staff Present:

John Crumm, Program Manager, Planning and Environmental Services, Transportation Committee Advisor
Jason Friedmann, Senior Planner
Justin Robinson, Associate Planner
John Paul Rae, Intern

Guest Speakers

Craig Bryson, Public Information Officer, Road Commission for Oakland County
Jim Page, Vice Chair, Transportation Committee of the Oakland County Roundtable

Members Not Present:

Jesse Berger, President, Berger & Sons
Doug Brown, ASTI Environmental
Gina Cavaliere, Director, Warren DDA/TIFA
Maura Cook, Daimler Chrysler Corporation
Michael Deyak, CFO, Premier Financial Credit Union
Dan Dirks, General Manager, SMART
Ed Hoover, Business Representative, Rizzo Services
Marilyn Lane, President, Lane Development
Pat Lehman, Retired Director Community Relations
Robert Milewski, President & CEO, Mt. Clemens General Hospital
Bill Westrick, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick

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THE MEETING WAS BROUGHT TO ORDER AT 3:40 P.M. by Co-Chairs, Anthony Viviano and Anthony Lombardo. John Crumm provided a brief overview of the previous meeting, informing the members the Quality of Life Committee will address the trails as a recreational activity; the Education and Workforce Development Committee will discuss occupational development and employment/commuting patterns in Macomb and Oakland counties.

PRESENTATION BY JIM PAGE AND CRAIG BRYSON

Following the presentation by Mr. Bryson, "Oakland County Congestion-Reduction Plan" (see printed PowerPoint) detailing the transportation challenges similar to those of Macomb, Mr. Page spoke of the grass roots group, *Businesses for Better Roads*, which evolved from the transportation issues identified by the Oakland County Roundtable. The group focuses on solving the problems of *congestion* and *condition* of Oakland County roads. Recognizing funding of improvements as the major impediment to solving their problems, the group studies ways to increase funds, conducts formal and informal voter surveys, maintains a website (www.oaklandbbr.com) and provides speakers to educate the general public, Chambers of Commerce, municipalities, private industry and the media.

Mr.'s Bryson and Page answered questions raised by the Committee in reviewing the BBR's December 16, 2005 Executive Summary of the Tri-County Road Survey of Oakland, Macomb, Wayne County, Michigan conducted by Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc. The survey assessed voter awareness of road conditions, tolerance of traffic congestion and receptiveness to new taxes to increase local (tri-county) revenues to remedy the problems. The survey revealed that 48% of Macomb County, 39% of Oakland County, 43% of Detroit, and 37% of Wayne County voters would support a ballot initiative for a tri-county sales tax of 0.5% and a property tax of 0.5 mill over 10 years. A voter survey approval of 65% is considered necessary to be effective at the polls; therefore, the BBR is continuing to meet with groups, educating them on the problems and offering possible solutions. As the report concludes, "When 70% say jobs/economy is the most important issue facing our state, it is not going to be the time people are going to vote in favor of new taxes." ¹

COMMITTEE QUESTION AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Observation: A state sales tax (versus a regional tax) would be necessary to support the business community. A State Sales Tax would require legislative amendment to the Michigan constitution.

Observation: With the development of alternative fuels, a gas tax would not be a viable long-term source of revenue.

Observation: To be fair to all (residents and businesses), any revenues raised must be shared equally between the communities in the northern and southern areas of the County.

Observation: The Businesses for Better Roads proposal does not include bridges, maintenance; etc., which must be considered.

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Question: Do we have lobbyists in Lansing to retrieve a higher portion of our “donor” funds?

Due to the needs of the outstate counties, excluding Kent which is also a “donor” county, it is unrealistic at this time for the State to change their formula for appropriating funds. In addition, even if the tri-county region were to receive all of the funds it sends to Lansing, there would not be enough additional revenue generated to correct existing problems.

Question: How do we address the public’s concern that road expansion encourages urban sprawl?

In Oakland County, road widening/construction is taking place where areas were developed fifteen (15) years ago.

Question: Is mass transit a possible solution to the problem of congestion?

Mass transit is important but current commuting patterns are so diverse it is currently impossible to create transit routes to service where people live and where they are going. More thought and planning needs to be done to understand how mass transit can become part of the solution.

Question: (Directed to Mr.’s Bryson and Page) What can Macomb County do?

Work together (Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties, along with the City of Detroit) to educate voters and study solutions to our joint problems.

ADJOURNMENT

It was suggested the Committee invite speakers from MDOT, SEMCOG and SMART to the June 20th meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Prepared by Kate Doyle

¹ Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc., “Executive Summary Of Tri-County Road Survey Oakland, Macomb, Wayne County, Michigan (N=600) December 16, 2005” p. 11.

Supporting and Informative Handouts: *OAKLAND COUNTY CONGESTION-REDUCTION PLAN*, A Businesses for Better Roads Proposal, printed PowerPoint Presentation.
Survey Says Motorists Want Congestion Addressed, But Economic Conditions Suggest Timing Is Not Right, A Businesses for Better Roads Report.
Businesses for Better Roads, “Public Relations and Outreach Committee Strategic Marketing Plan Draft.
Businesses for Better Roads, Summary of Presentations To Date (as of June, 2006) and web homepage – www.oaklandbbr.com.
Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc., “Executive Summary Of Tri-County Road Survey Oakland, Macomb, Wayne County, Michigan (N=600) December 16, 2005”
“AT THE MACINAC POLICY CONFERENCE: Region’s transit, growth on agenda”, *The Detroit Free Press*, June 5, 2006, web edition.